

\$2

Jetbunny

the
**flaming
lips**

enon

regia

timonium

the
**poster
children**

number 8



soul coughing - rusted root - korn - big head
todd and the monsters - prodigy - matthew sweet
- everlast - green day - our lady peace - the off-
spring - no doubt - barenaked ladies - blur -
matchbox 20 - alice in chains - seven mary three
- cracker - better than ezra - 311 - wallflowers -
beck - local h - tonic - k's choice - marilyn man-
son - ben folds five - depeche mode - squirrel
nut zippers - harvey danger - cake - radiohead -
The LSU Radio Station
bush - the verve - southern culture on the skids -

The LSU Radio Station



athenaeum - creed - days of the new - verve
pipe - filter - jane's addiction - hole - wallflowers - green day - g. love and special sauce - dandy warhols - pixies - our lady peace - morphine - ani difranco - third eye blind - rage against the machine - dave matthews band - k's choice - r.e.m. - live - counting crows - fiona apple - sister hazel - rancid - toadies - nixons -

Jetbunny

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"I have to get right back outside so all the kids can enjoy me."

IN MEDIAS RESIDUE

Thanks for picking up Jetbunny #8. It's been a while since we did #7 because, well, let's see... first Christmas put a damper on the influx of content (that doesn't include the CD's from bands I've never heard of coming in the mail every day), then I decided that I wasn't even going to do another magazine and concentrated on the possibility of doing a Jetbunny TV show. We shot some of it. It was fucking awful. It had absolutely nothing to do with the magazine and, yeah so that was bad. Then there was the idea that we'd just be an online zine, but then I thought hell how does that make us different from anybody else? You know... if you've checked out our website over the last several months you'd see I couldn't bother myself to update it because every time I do something the HTML would screw up and then I'd have to figure out what I did wrong. This is precisely why we always send people to Insound.com. As far as I'm concerned that's been our website for most of last year. Then there was the call from WBros. saying that we could get a Flaming Lips interview, and then I thought I'd just throw something together just to say I'd done something. When we heard Enon, we had to involve them so then I said that's enough for me. 2 articles and about 50+ reviews... it's good enough for me. That's when I got a huge backlash. By the way, if you know me, you know that every even slightly drastic decision I make gets a huge backlash and everyone thinks I'm an idiot for a week. Fred Weaver and Lee Barbier probably gave me the most shit there (I might also point out that, as I sit here writing this filler, neither of them have given me everything that they said they would, but they aren't getting paid, I understand. Whoops!!... fell off my chair--- lost my balance sitting on this fatass

wallet). So then I said, fine, we'll wait and get some more shit together which translates immediately into "until I get sick of everyone asking me when I'm going to get my shit together and put out another magazine." In that time we found some more people to talk to. Louis Schefano of Regia came to stay here for a while, moved in down the street and we did a three week long interview. When it came down to finally saying okay it's ready, we can do it now, some fucker filled Rusty's head with more ideas for the magazine and we had to put it off AGAIN. Oh, yeah, then



Batman goes assless on Prince Night



Lee would die 4 U

we missed the press deadline because we had to prepare for Jetbunny's Prince night. In the meantime I said it again--this is the last one. I won't do this again. This is the last one... wait a minute. I forgot something. I don't mean that this is the last Jetbunny. A month before any of this happened, I passed the torch. Yep, Zack Soto is the new editor, while I'll hold the title of editor-in-chief. Whatever the hell that means. Welcome Zack. You are a blessing.

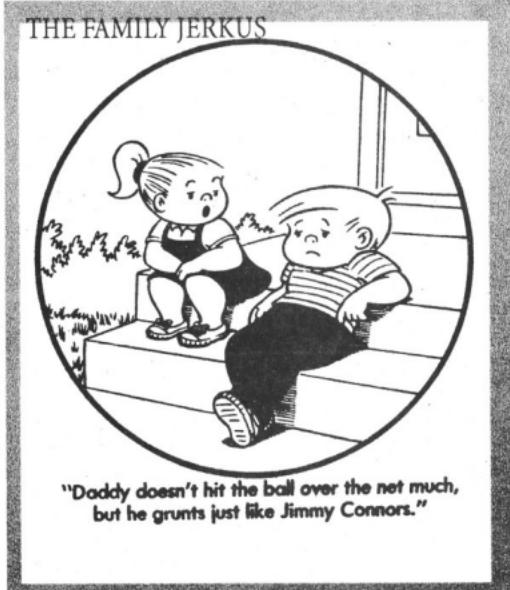
Now I'll back up again and go over (in the most scatterbrained order possible) all the social shit the JB staff and friends have gone through over the last few months. Let's start with the most distant memory that I can think of. Training Bra. Rusty, Darby, and I started a little three piece and got some songs together, trading instruments and singing and whatnot. At about the point that we were certain that we were ready to take it to the stage, Gabe Daigle threw us a spot opening for a side project or something like that of a band that I must admit that I've never really liked, Weezer. They were Special Goodness and as far as I'm concerned they were a bunch of dumbasses, but who cares. So yeah, we got up there hammered with about 10 songs that we didn't finish before we were throwing shit at each other and screaming at each other do go piss up a rope. After we started the first of my songs, Rus threw the sticks in the air, thankfully not at me, and stormed off stage. Then I yelled at him over the heads of the audience to come back and get his crap. Believe it or not they all thought it was a put on and that it was a great show, or at least a great spectacle. It's amazing the 3 of us can still live under the same roof. I wouldn't call it a miracle, but at least an unexplained phenomenon... an X-file.

Somewhere around that time Rusty shot a hole in the roof, destroyed an ironing board, a stool, and threw a hammer through the window on Andrew Black's dare. This is a guy who scared the Trail of Dead.

I got a job at Digital FX working on commercials and instructional videos, but first I had to paint the building. They stuck me a Blue Cross and a Lane Memorial spot to aid in my eventual stardom, so I don't have that much to complain about there.

I suppose I should run over the JB nights real quick. Cure night, awful, but fun. Apt. 43 All Stars, Kaleidoscope (now Resinator), Adam Helltone, and Section 8 all participated. DJ Julie from KLSU learned to play some songs on the bass, too. Depeche Mode was probably the most impressive. Apt. 43, Rye, Resinator, Serendipity all were quite well prepared. I fainted at the end of the show. Then Blondie Night, Slobot, Resinator, Joseph Burton and his brother: the Ghengis Khanmen... everyone said this show would bomb as it was pouring down rain and completely underadvertized. Wrong. The last one was Prince 2 as I've said. This was really Section 8's show. My assles pants didn't really steal their thunder I must admit. We also got shut down before we could do "Let's Go Crazy" or "Kiss."

And then there was Baton Rouge's South By So What? I could rant on this for hours for all the shit



IN MEDIAS RESIDUE



A Cure Night bowel musement

that I wrote about this for the Gambit. I won't say much more than this: maybe I'm an asshole for saying too much, but press is PRESS, isn't it. This is more press. There were some good shows, and some dogs. I could've been a WAY bigger jerk.

If you don't know what I'm talking about because you don't read the Gambit, or you don't live here, or just don't care, SXSW? was our little festival put on by Gabe and Jeremy of the Blue Room who rerouted a bunch of bands to play here before heading to South By Southwest. It was a good idea at the time and we got to see some really good shows. For me they were Man or Astroman?, the Poster Children, Enon (although that was our show), and the Trail of Dead (damn close to almost being our show...More on that later.).

We also got passes to Bonne Fete, BR's second annual birthday party. I can't say it was a dog. I had a blast, although no one would have been able to tell if they'd read what I've had published about it. Sorry. Sometimes you have to say stuff that sucked was good,

sometimes you have to pan stuff that the population of BR would hate that you really got into. It's true. The passes and the liquor sure helped. I even had fun watching crap. I'll watch anything if I'm hammered... except for Funk, Alt. Country, and Blues Rock. I don't enjoy vomitting any more than anybody else. I learned some thing that weekend:

1. Tecuza tastes like beer with that's been ashed in.
2. Don McLean is washed up.
3. Corporations like Entergy, Eatal, Chevrolet, and so on have no idea what the people really want and will stand in the streets with with questionaires and free coozies to hear you make shit up.
4. A 37 year old trailer park couple will listen to anything if they have a blanket to sit on and

a lukewarm beer.

5. Give a 14 year old something to do on a Sunday night and he'll spend every cents his parents will afford him. We wound up doing an interview with Filter. Fred Weaver was there. He wanted to interview Hank Williams III, but really he just wanted to give him a piece of his mind. We didn't ask him on the bus to talk to Filter, knowing what would happen. When the singer said they were going to play with Veruca Salt we said "Oh, yeah, Our friend outside opened for Veruca Salt recently."

"Where is he?" the guy said.

"Oh, he's right outside."

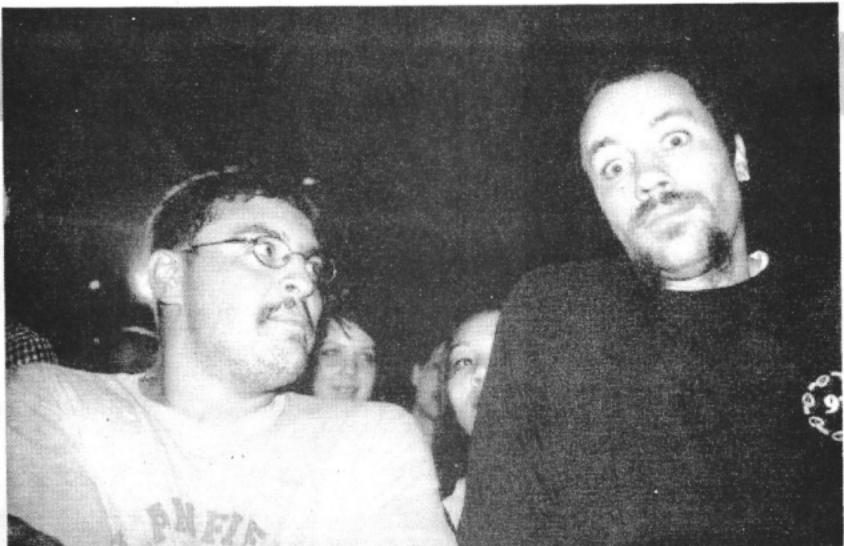
"Well, bring him in!"

"Uh... you don't want to do that... he's kinda opinionated."

"Why? What does he think we suck?" he says as he's standing up about to go pick a fight.

"He thinks everybody sucks... it's not personal."

Fred rules doesn't he? So far he's gotten to share the stage with, let's see... Low, Mick Turner, June of 44, Veruca Salt,



Morales and Ron of Migas

Verbena, The Burning Airlines, the Trail of Dead (x3), Bevis Frond, I know there are more, but I've peaked, haven't I? Now they're telling me he's BANNED from the Spanish Moon for what happened at the Trail of Dead's last show. At first we thought that it had to be the riot that ensued, but that was Rusty and Lee throwing all those bottles and monitors. I don't know the whole story here, I just find it odd, and well, I like controversy. I just don't like it when it's pointed at me.

Speaking of having it aimed at me, my apologies for anyone who was offended by our Best/Worst/Biggest Assholes list. It's was everyone's fault. I think in the end the only people who were really offended never said anything, and why would they?

Oh, I forgot about Fred playing with Migas at the Bayou. They played here with the Trail of Dead the first time they came through. That was another one of those fucked up shows where everything seems to work in reverse. The last time Fred played the Bayou they said, never again. Then they said "again" again and when Migas got on stage and started while Fred was still playing, which was sort of the plan, they were of the mind that these guys from Austin were handling up on poor Fred and needed to be taken out back for an ass-whuppin'. Then they got pissed when Migas was too loud, and were "running people off." So they had to stop. I love this town. Down is up. Up is down.

I've said enough to get stabbed to death already. DLG, Ed.



"Know what I wished? I wished I'd get the BIG piece of the bone — and it worked!"

ENON

Enon is none backwards, the name of a manufacturer of microwave ovens, a town in Ohio and a vacation spot in the south, any one of which is given as the source of the name of the band that shares the moniker depending on the mood of frontman/de facto leader John Schmersal. While Enon the band developed into its present form in the geographical locales of Kentucky and New York city, musically it resides just off the interstate where technological gadgets and samplers collide in drunk driving accidents with cheap, slightly detuned guitars and junk percussion.

Actually, this bit of terrain is familiar to the bands members: Schmersal was the dissonance crazed guitarist in Dayton, Ohio's late, great Brainiac, drummer Steve Calhoun was in New York's clatter-rock ensemble Skeleton Key, guitarist/keyboardist/sampler jockey Rick Lee played junk percussion in Skeleton Key as well as guitar in Cibo Matto/Jon Spencer Blues Explosion offshoot Butter 08. While traces of those bands can be heard in Enon's music, the distinguishing factor is a personal tone in the songwriting that belies the origins of the endeavor.

When Brainiac frontman Tim Taylor was killed tragically in an automobile accident just as the band had completed a successful tour of Europe opening for Beck and was set to make the move to a major label from indie giant Touch and Go, Schmersal found himself stranded in Newport, Kentucky, across the river from Cincinnati, Ohio. "Just a short while before Tim was killed in his accident, I had totalled my own car. So, I was stuck in this town, going crazy, with nothing to do but write music and record it myself out of desperation." Schmersal wound up with a batch of songs that fit into two camps; acoustic based, almost folky musings that were recently released under the name John Stuart Mill, and electro-pop type material that came to be Enon's first releases. "Actually," says Schmersal, "the first Enon single was comprised of ideas I had intended to use in Brainiac." After relocating to New York, Schmersal began jamming with friends, including Calhoun and Lee



individually, whom he had gotten to know when Brainiac and Skeleton Key toured together. As time progressed, the three ended up getting together to make Enon a full fledged band. Around this time, Schmersal was also establishing a friendship with noted producer/Barkmarket leader Dave Sardy, whom he met through a soundman the two both employed. When Sardy decided to launch the See Thru Broadcasting label to present music dedicated to self expression over calculated pandering, he decided to offer a home to both John Stuart Mill and Enon.

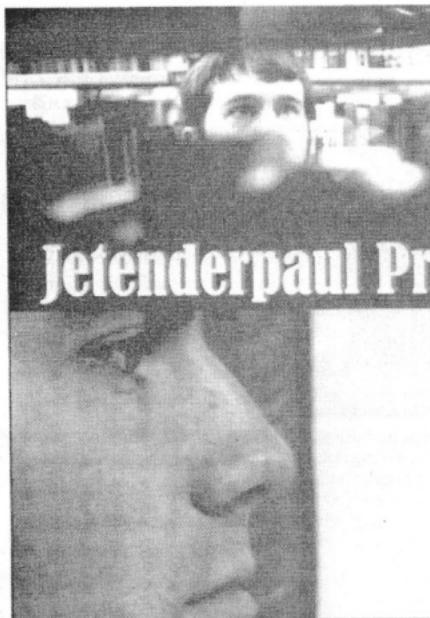
Enon now operates as a band as opposed to a solo project with backing musicians. Though they simply learned Schmersal's songs at first, now they write collectively and all bring in ideas. The result is a multi-faceted band that manages to offer a variety of approaches, yet has such a strong personality that it all seems coherent. Their first full length effort, *believe01*, is a joyous cuisinart concoction of pop that pleases as it surprises. In the opening "Rubber Car", Lee sets up a groove with bass and sampled pots and pans percussion which Schmersal then throws for a loop by adding a falsetto soul melody. "Get The Letter Out" and "For The Sum Of It" time collapse the early, frenetically

experimental side of XTC with that band's later sophisticated melodicism. "Cruel" conjures the atmosphere of a David Lynch film in song form and the closing "Biofeedback" takes a connecting jab at technopunkfunk. In between, Enon will take you just about anywhere except where you expect.

Armed with several suitcases loaded with gadgets, keyboards and samplers, a trove of vintage imported budget model guitars and the band's newest member, former Blonde Redhead/Van Pelt/Lapse bassist Toko, Schmersal is leading Enon out into the clubs of America. Onstage the band manages to project their enjoyment and self-fulfillment, even while racing around during every song to hit triggers and play bits on the keyboards and samplers scattered around the stage. For the future, Schmersal hopes that the band will release a ton of singles, tour a lot, not have to worry about paying their bills, and overcome the difficulties of trying to base a

touring rock band in New York city. As for his John Stuart Mill project, he wishes to continue if there's enough interest, but doesn't wish to see it evolve into a touring affair. "I would love to keep doing that stuff, just to document ideas I have on four track, in a spontaneous environment."

Finally, on a subject which should be familiar to regular readers of Jetbunny, admitted Michael Jackson fan Schmersal becomes excited when asked if he prefers Off The Wall or Thriller. "Oh man, Off The Wall is definitely the one. If we're gonna talk about the best thing he's done period I'd have to say the first Jackson 5 album, but of those two it's Off The Wall. Thriller has some undeniably great moments, but it's also marks the point where Michael Jackson went from being really good to really scary." I personally hope that in the future Enon itself finds a way to go from being really good to really scary, but in a good sense! -L. Barbier



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REGIA



PART 1 (the interview)

At the moment, you are here, but...

"I just tried to get set up to do some kind of home recording and I realized that I left the power cord to my 4-track in Birmingham. I don't have a place anywhere, that's a major problem, homelessness. It's really killing me. I don't go home anywhere. The last two days I've slept at Jerry's. Before that I was sleeping on Bonnie's couch. I'm looking for a place, but I don't want to live in Lafayette, I don't think. I'm really at a point in my life where I'm done hanging out... I'm just done. I really want to just get to work.

"In Athens there are more opportunities to meet and record with extremely talented people. Everybody I know there is an amazing musician. I've met some people that are going to be some serious producers in a couple of years. Baton Rouge is so spread out, and there's no central musical focal point here. Being friends with all the insiders, there's a lot of tension. I could live here, but the one major reason for me to be here is gone... if these things can't work then there is more of a

Upon returning to Baton Rouge, Louis Schefano, who is Regia, found that his time here would become a stern process of reinvention. For the most part, that process involves the recording of his follow-up to last year's *The Art Of Navigation*. When it comes to reinventing oneself, the added complexity of living in the world and calling it your only real home is quite difficult. We are invariably guided by our surroundings, the familiarities of places, people, fixtures that we count on as constants in our lives. The artist draws from these things to place himself into the context that his audience will experience his creations. How perplexing when these mysteries still have yet to be revealed to him. For the moment he seems to have rested. Perhaps to make his new record, perhaps to find himself, perhaps to find one is not the same as the other. Recording a pop masterpiece is not guaranteed to save your existence, nor is finding joy in life the key to pop success.

reason to be in Athens.

"I really don't think I want to live in Lafayette, and I really don't think I can afford to get into New Orleans right now. I lived there before with Remy Zero and thought it was great, then sure enough a few months later we were all wanting to commit suicide and we couldn't figure out why. We got our big break, we were recording in Daniel Lanois's studio, and we got home and the joke was on us: our house had burned down. So we immediately moved.

The Art of Navigation had an element of closure that begs the question... for the next record is the wound opening up again?

"That record is about letting go. I'm trying to avoid treading the same ground. I'm just hung up on relationships. I think from a Jungian perspective, in that the only way that you get in touch with yourself is through a relationship, an intimate relationship with another person. As soon as I read that, I was hooked. I do, however, want to somehow knock down the seriousness of it all, and just make light of it this time. The Art of Navigation, I don't know... Maybe that shouldn't have been my first record's title, but who cares... It's definitely relationship-based still.

"I use some people as a gauge to decide whether I'm going to finish something, which is stupid. I've played songs for people who say "Omigod, that's your next hit," then played them for people who just didn't say anything. Everything deserves to

be finished, because it's always something different, when it's done, that you never thought of when you were writing it. I'm always chopping stuff out mentally and seeing how I think it sounds. I'm always editing. On this record I want there to be sections of just music. All my songs are really melody/lyric based and now I want something to just be a piece of music.

What about love? What can you say about love? Is there an end? Can you be happy for the rest of your life?

"That doesn't seem to be possible. I hate to say that, but at this point... things aren't very clear. A relationship can only work if the two individuals are clear, but once you've been through so much shit... there's no way to come into a relationship without baggage. I think I'm buying into America too much, you know, the American Dream. And it's just not gonna happen. Settle down with someone you love in a house and have some security. I don't really want to be a rock star, but then I want to sell records. I'm too fucked up to be any kind of star, I think. I can't even get started, because I'm so fucked up. My perception of my career is that it is a fiasco. I always forget that my solo career only started a year ago.

"It seems like IndieRock these days isn't about the songs so much as it is about an attitude. There's such an endless stream of IndieRock bands that are really good, but are just filler between those that are really extraordinary... GBV, Pavement, Beck. I'm afraid I'm just going to go by in the stream. Those things are totally out of your control. The reason those things are so great is because they write great songs.

No, it's because they stick it out. They work through everything and then keep going, as if looking for more things to work out, just to simply exist as a great band long enough to have been around... One extraordinary album and that's it... footnotesville. You have to have an arsenal. You have to work it all out for years.

That's why I write music... but it turns out I'm really not working out my problems. You'd think that if I sing about this, it would be working it out for me, and I'd hoped it would, but it didn't. Now people are quoting my songs to me to show me what a fuck-up I am. I think that because at one particular moment in time everything I write is based on the closest possible to the source of how I really feel, but it's only like a fraction of a moment, it freezes; it takes a picture of this fucked-up view and now that's been pinned on me, like that must be a reflection of me. Listen to all this sad shit... but that was just a snapshot that now I have to carry around.

Where are the snapshots of the positive things? At least we need to see a more whimsical view of the negative.

Perhaps... Less serious...

*...just to lighten things up.
I know.*



PART 2 (the Posterkids seminar)

Louis and I sit on the parade grounds and try the interview again. The first shot at it was so depressing, that most of it was, well, unusable. Things really aren't that bad, in fact they're good, so we talk about what needs to be addressed in the way of positive things spinART keeps coming up. A little disgruntled about this and that we can't seem to get away from the subject, as every positive thing is somehow hampered by he who distributes Regia. As luck would have it I notice a Poster Kid walking by, Howie, drummer, and he came over and we started chatting about how badly the interview was going because it always came down to the record industry. Now, if you are at all familiar with the Poster Children, you'll know that they have an extreme ethic about IndieRock that comes out in just about everything that they do. They've been burned a lot of times by corporate suits of major and independent status and they are now more than ever poster children for the industry. Howie wasn't all that interested in the interview, but Rose came by a few minutes later and seemed pretty keyed up about the idea. When it came down to getting together, she just wound up twisting Howie's arm, and he went over to the coffee shop to do the interview instead.

In the 30 minutes we sat there Louis and I might've said one or two words. Mostly I just sneezed a fuckuva lot. Here's what Howie said Rose would've said:

You can't expect too much from labels, especially independent ones.

Especially with money, because they don't have any. So in other words it's important to be as self-sufficient as you can and use the label for what they're able to do which is get your record out there and do some promos. We operated that way even with Warner/Reprise. We never took tour support, even from a major label. It's not really like you have to pay it back cash, but it comes out of your royalties, so you have to sell a million and a half before you start getting royalties. With 3 records on Warner/Reprise/Sire/Whatever, I don't think we ever got royalties from a major label.

This is our second on spinART. The only connection Sire has to this is through the ADA, and spinART has a co-distribution deal with Sire, so now the ADA can distribute it, that's it to the best of my knowledge. So now Sire has now real connection although they still took money right out of our pockets, because the ADA had to pay Sire a fee to do this which otherwise would have been about 6000 buck that we would have split. SpinART explained the situation, "that we had to pay the ADA, before it happened... but what can you do? We just learned not to expect, or not to rely on them for much of anything, like the money."

This money we make most of it, say 75%, comes straight from touring, the guarantees we get, merchandising—the things we can do. We can go on tour, get the door, get the guarantee, sell the t-shirts without any strings attached to it. It's really all we can count on. We had hoped to get more money out of our new record with spinART, then that whole Sire thing came up and we were pissed, it was stupid, but we certainly weren't surprised. I was kinda counting on some of that cash to pay my rent and stuff, and we didn't have it and... well, par for the course, just the way it is. I don't know whether it helped or hurt spinART. I don't know what they get

out of it. Maybe ADA gets something out of it because they can save cost, they don't have to send their own shipments, and it's worth it for them to have six thousand bucks of ours... it's just the nature of corporate America, this joining together of Warner Bros. And AOL, just share the resources and save money so executives can get paid, stuff like that. These are business people.

I have friends who are signed to indie labels, who make records, the indie label has no money to put it out, and so they don't put the bands record out and not let them have it because they're waiting for another big label to buy it so they can get cash. Years go by and the record never gets out and the band gets f-u-c-k-e-d, fucked, big time. It happens.

and it's BS. God knows that it happens with major labels. Some friends of mine signed with Dreamworks in August of 1998 and their record just came out... and I consider them to be lucky! I like the stories where the bands, I saw it somewhere I think it was like VH-1 or something, this band, their name was Vertical Horizon... I don't have anything to say about them. The music wasn't my cup of tea, but the story about them was that they sold 70,000 records on their own, and when you get down to it, I think that so many... people think the band doesn't stand alone, but it has to. These companies are too big, they don't give a fuck... until someone gets a hit, and they see that they can make money, they pool their resources so they can pat themselves on the back at Grammy time and say "We sold 10 billion Alanis Morissette records!" The band has to stand alone. It's you and your music, and us and our music, and we NEED labels because we can't drive around and sell it out of the back of our cars, well we could, but... we need labels to get our record out and to generate press, but you have to do as much as you can without the label and use them for what you know they're good for. They put your record out at the very least, and hopefully, if everything goes well they might even give you tour support, they might even give you extra promotions, or give you money to make a video.

Bands do it all kinds of different ways. We keep everything as much as we can, in our own house. We survive. We don't make tons of money. We aren't rock stars, but we do as we please. We make the music we please, and that kind of the point. Of course we all want a little more notoriety and cash in our pockets, not have to work, but on the other hand it's good to be where we're at to. I'm on tour and all my friends are home working.



PART 3 (the departure)



The last week that Louis was here in BR was an impatient time for him. He had decided to make the move to Athens after all. He had a show with Regia on Thursday and the night after that he was going to do "Nothing Compares 2 U" on at Jetbunny's Prince Tribute. During that time I was given the opportunity to hear about 5 songs that he'd more or less completed for his next record. No titles, just a CDR

with 5 tracks. He'd expressed a great interest in Regia becoming more of a rock band. My opinion was, and still is, that to be a rock band it has to start from the inside out, that rock is something you live like; it's behavior and attitude. You can't just walk into a studio and say "OK, let's make these songs rock." If they aren't rock songs you just sound like you're playing louder. Do the songs rock? Well, to be fair, not really. But then Louis doesn't want to be a rock star. Inside out. That's none of my concern. There's a lot of music I think is absolutely amazing that doesn't rock. These five songs were great, introspective pop tunes. He's not coming anywhere near running out of them, either.

The Regia show turned out well. The Urbosleeks have settled the roles of Regia, the others. We had lunch the day after. He wasn't sure how the show went, but I think he knew that we enjoyed ourselves, whether or not we were getting our pants blown off by balls to the wall rock'n'roll. The last time I talked to him was the next night, right before he asked me to get on stage and sing "Nothing Compares 2U" with him. I think ripping my pants off might have gotten him pissed. Sorry about that, Louis. He played drums with us on "Controversy," so I guess he wasn't that mad. Oh and he slept on the couch after watching "True Romance" later that night. I missed all that. In the morning his guitars weren't sitting in the corner anymore. He's was like a meteorological phenomenon, like a hurricane, that we stick a name on because of the profound effect it's had on us: "HURRICANE LOUIS BLOWS THROUGH LSU AREA LEAVING HUNDREDS CONFUSED, PENSIVE." -DLG



"I wish I could fly on a trapeze so I could wear one of those little shiny silver bathing suits."

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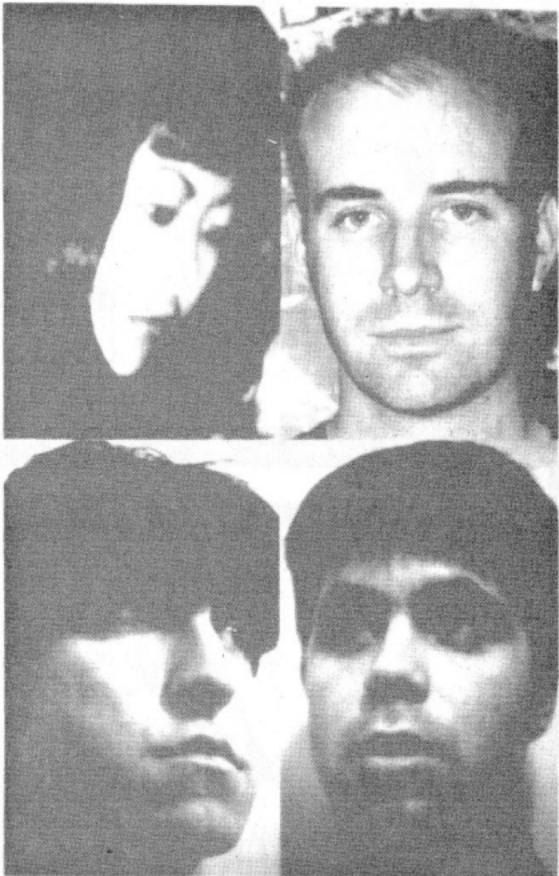
The first thing I thought when I listened to SUSPENDE ANIMATION was, is there some sort of plan behind making the songs extra long to avoid the crowd's natural reaction to clap every time you stop?

You mean, like how they kind of blend from one to the next? I think there might be a plan behind it, but I don't know if we could figure it out exactly. The songs have their ups and downs but there's still a kind of mood that the whole thing puts you in, and if the songs blend I think it's easier to stay in that mood. When Adam G (drummer) and I listen to it, we fall asleep before it's over. That's really satisfying. There's a little break between the 2nd and 3rd song, for when we eventually put it out on vinyl.

Andrew from Starstreamer noticed that about our CD too, that we made the songs flow together. You two are the only ones to mention that. Maybe you have a connection there.

When Low, Cat Power and Quasi have played here they have openly complained that people talk all through the set, then clap when it's over. How hard do you think it is for drunken crowds to get what's going on.

I think being a little drunk helps us relax and get into the songs more, so I would hope it would be the same for the audience. If you are really, really drunk, maybe our loud parts will help you throw up easier. I don't know, it seems like the people right up around the stage don't talk; they're really into it. It's the people outside of the little aura that talk. And being drunk usually makes you more patient. You can just sit and experience things; you're not so antsy. So I think that alcohol might help,



especially if we are playing a song that takes time to get going, either with rhythm or melodies.

If we play in front of 25 people, they are all quiet. If we are in front of 150, it's the same 25 that are into it, while the rest of the crowd chit-chats. That is exactly what happened when we opened for Acetone. And how about those types that hysteri-

cally cackle when they get really drunk? That's the only thing that throws me off, when I hear bone-crackling shrieks of laughter. But the low rumble of the crowd isn't bad, it's just like another layer of atmosphere. And are they clapping afterwards because they wanted to clap, or because they were too programmed to do otherwise? We'll never know.

The last time we played the Smell in LA, there were 60 people there, and when we would play a really quiet part, you could hear a pin drop. That was really cool because it made everything much more intense, it was like all this focus on these sounds. So we actually got really atmospheric in some parts, because the mood called for it. Whereas sometimes when it's a rowdier but really supportive crowd, if you keep the music more driving and less drifted out, I think the crowd really gets into that; like at the late, great Sucker in Silverlake.

So hmmm, I think we adapt sometimes to the energy from the audience. For instance, we have played a few pop shows where the audience was out for a night on the town you know, like not for the music but to talk and socialize? I do that sometimes myself, but since we were playing, we punished the audience by playing all of the songs very abrasively, very edgy and dark, with no real space or beauty, everything was just harsh. So sometimes it's important to punish audiences that aren't into it. I mean if you are on stage and you get a bad vibe from the audience, it's best to respond with anger.

You know when there's a band you like, and you want to listen to them but a friend comes up to you and starts trying to talk? Isn't that awful? You just have to be assertive and be like "Good to see you. I'll talk to you after the show." Still, it's hard to be assertive sometimes.

Do you reinvent the live show, to compensate (i.e. slide shows or just turning up so loud that it doesn't matter like Codiene?)

You know we played with those guys in 1994, and they weren't that loud, it was weird. But that was when they were touring for The White Birch album, so I think they had turned down by then. I wish I had seen them circa the Frigid Stars tour, because that must have been loud. Do you know that song "Castle" on the Afternoon Delight compilation? It's amazing.

We do in fact get very loud sometimes, and then we will ask the audience if it hurts their ears. And then we can

turn down accordingly. What's really nice is to be very loud and then explore little subtle melodies later on in the set, at a very quiet level. I think volume can make the audience come into your world, and then once they are in it, you can drift out and extend quiet melodies, because the listeners are already hypnotized a bit. We get hypnotized when we play, too. Adam G. goes into a strange drummer trance, he is definitely the one to watch at our shows. I am boring, I will just close my eyes or look at my shoes. Actually Tracy is very gorgeous so she is one to watch, too, but in terms of studying someone who is in an altered state, it's got to be Adam G. He might even drool if you are lucky. No joke.

As for slide shows, those are usually kinda boring, and so are lasers. So I don't think we're going to ever do that. Actually I went to a club called Tron, and it had this one really good laser, if you look into it you feel like you're entering a portal. So maybe that would work. What would be cool is like if it could be pitch black, so you are only hearing things, and nothing visual happens. But then people might get hurt and we wouldn't be able to see our instruments, so I guess that's a no-win situation. I love it when the sound guys are stoned and they are also doing the lighting, because they will give us the trippy lighting that will evolve as the songs evolve. Like it will be blue in a slow part and as we accelerate he'll switch to all reds. I think blanket lighting can make a mood more intense, but if it's just random weird colors, I mean any more than one primary color, forget it.

One thing I noticed about your songs is that they are almost like regular length pop songs slowed down to a crawl. The melodies however don't seem to get lost. Do you write these songs to suit the length that they eventually become?

Yeah, there are a lot of melodies in there but they are really stretched out over time. If you hear the songs at a faster speed they become really clear, but at normal speed they take time to show themselves. It's so weird about writing songs, all four of us have talked about this, and we really can't remember how they came into being. It's like there is a fog, and then passages of the song come out of the fog, and then eventually we put them together and the song becomes clear. But then we wonder, how did this come about? That's what's exciting about it. Our songs are very mysterious to us. -DLG



FATE UP AGAINST THE WILL OF...

I read about your love of Echo and the Bunnymen's Ocean Rain, and it reminded me of the first time I heard the name The Flaming Lips. I ran out and bought your record actually confusing it with the lyric on "Silver." It was burning Lips! Now I can't hear it without thinking of that record.

Michael Ivans: I don't know if I ever made the connection, hmhhh... it's hard to think whether I ever noticed that or not. We've even met Ian McCulloch and he didn't say anything about it either. Although when that Paul McCartney song flaming pie came out we were a bit taken aback. Actually, it's funny that you mention that because I was looking at a women's magazine a few months ago I guess there was a lipstick ad and the shade was called 'flaming lips.'



THE FLAMING LIPS

How often do you feel misunderstood by your audience?

DRUGS

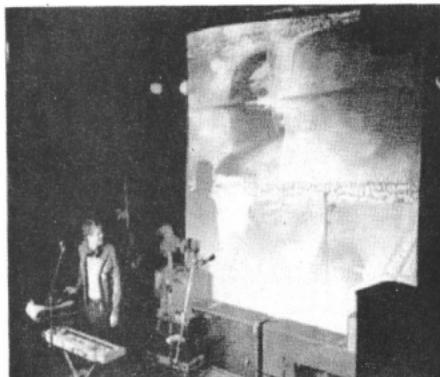
Most of the time it bugs me personally that people will think that we are totally on drugs, like it was impossible for us to come up with our thing, be it the lyrics, or the sounds, or the concept without taking copious amounts of hallucinogens. We've come to grips with that sort of imagery, and a lot of it comes I guess from the fact that a lot of the music we were influenced by reflected that sort of thing, but when people look at the music and the art and immediately put it onto that level, personally, I kind of get, well, insulted; "MAN...you must have been FUUUUCKED UUUUP!!

POP

We really like pop. I don't know if we're very good at it, but we like doing it; we enjoy listening to it, but at this stage, whether it's experimental and odd or maybe just unadulterated pop, it's what comes out of the things we were doing. You have some people that spend their whole lives trying to craft the perfect pop song, and frankly we aren't that talented. We sit down to work and it's not let's try to do this or that, it's just *what if* we did this or that and then we just do it.

ART and COMMERCIALISM

Commercialism. One of these days everyone who decides that they are going to make it their life's work has to accept if they are in a band that's what it's all about. We are people who do have to sell and it's just part of the whole concept. People will read too much into being commercial as if it's some sin against art, where if you think about it, to purposely be so obscure as to not sell anything—That's easy. We've done that before, and



quite frankly, it didn't help us a bit. I don't think it furthered our integrity. People think it's easy to sell records. They look at something like Boyzone, and I know we're nowhere near that level of commerciality, but people think that they aren't working their asses off. Look who they have to contend with. Loads of Backstreet Boys and In Sync and, well, new ones pop up every day... I was just watching CNN and now there's this boy vocal band 2Gether, and...they've got the comic angle on it, but their selling it like it was real.

Obviously it doesn't slow you down, but do you find that because your fans expect the abnormal and esoteric, is it harder for them to understand the simple things? I don't think so...

THE SIMPLE THINGS

In the big picture, we make music for people who like music. Steven (Drowzd) claims to have this friend whose roommate is a big Limp Bizkit fan. He claims that everytime he hear's the song Superman he'd cry.

When I think that we can have that kind of affect on him, it makes me think that there is something universally simple about how strong the song is that he can get it. Someone who spends most of his day listening to loud and angry music. When you're in College and you read philosophy, you find it very hard to get through those books because they're so dense. You live a little while then later you see that in one sentence this guy's collapsed what would take hours

of sitting around talking about into one single sentence. Our hope is to hone down our ideas to express lyrically something that can be easily understood, but usually isn't. Sometimes it's hard to read and hear, "what's he saying? is he happy is he sad." I think we've learned to communicate our ideas better. It's not simple minded but simplicity is its hallmark.

The fan who actually does care and is interested would have to be open enough that if he'd followed us over the years would expect the unexpected; he should go with it, not that he has to like it. I think it's boring when bands do what you expect.

The first time I heard Ocean Rain I was sitting in a club with some people whose reaction was "What's this? This doesn't sound like Echo and the Bunnymen at all!" and I thought "That's what's so awesome about

it. They've always been this rather conventional psychedelic punk band and then all of a sudden they sound epic." At the time I know that it lost a lot of their fans and that's unfortunate. But you can't second guess anything. You don't know what people's reactions are going to be, and more than you know the cure for undiscovered diseases. You do it and hope people like it. We sit in the studio and believe we have free reign to be mad scientists. A few years ago we thought about heavily orchestrating everything, but didn't know how to do it. Luckily, technology has caught up with us in all kinds of ways, from computers to samplers to screen rendering and redrawing software.

The Soft Bulletin, which I actually heard before Zaireeka, an album I steered clear of for a while, just because I was afraid of the hassle, and I thought this is the first concept album I've heard since XTC's Skylarking that I thought was clear and concise. It's hard to be thematically psychedelic and musically poppy without losing focus, but it's even easier to lose focus by being spacious and trippy and having songs that go on and on and lyrics that read like novels. Pop Albums rarely have one point that they explore all of the facets of, like the way The Soft Bulletin explores the similarities of the very small and the very large.

THE INFINITE AND THE INFINITECIMAL

The interplay between that which is infinite and that which is infinitesimal convey most of our spirituality in very simple terms, not easy, but simple. I think we've always tried to reflect that dichotomy in everything we do. There were earlier tours with smoke machines, lasers, light shows, in clubs that sat 20 people. And that's the way try to live. Encapsulated, yet vast.

For instance, we really made Zaireeka at the same time as the Soft Bulletin, so we actually put out 5 records... four of which are one and another that was before and after the others. So we did a lot and got a lot out of the experimenting we did with Zaireeka as well as with the Soft Bulletin.

It is my opinion that art is always bigger than the artist; it's birthed from the artist, but grows and gets interpreted and judged on its own. You get lauded for its achievements and scorned for its failures, but when you realize that you can't touch it anymore and history owns it, it's an entity much larger than the individuals who created it (unless it's just mediocre).

How much bigger is The Soft Bulletin than the Flaming Lips?

ART and THE ARTIST

Well even with mediocre groups, the Monkees, for me, comes to mind, a new generation can come along and elevate them into something else. At the time some kids liked it; they were a silly made-up TV version of the Beatles and no one thought they were any good, but some how there is this place in everyone's hearts for them now as a great achievement, although I don't think anyone would really be able to explain it. Who knows whether the Backstreet Boys will be a great achievement.

Ocean Rain I think eclipses Echo and the Bunnymen, where as I've said, at the time it was a let down. It's interesting to see that even now rock historians and critics will put it in their top 50. It's nice to think that that can happen.

When we started working on the Soft Bulletin, people would hear what we'd done so far and they were confused. They really didn't get it, not for a while. We were using

looped samples, as ideas... as tools, and we'd find that when we went into the studio, and repeated the vocal backing line through a delay, due to limitations, it wouldn't work. We had to sing it with the same idea but that just sounded stupid. The delayed voice of a looped 4 measure beat sounds better than do it exactly all by yourself, but we still hadn't gotten that far, so it sounded wrong both ways.

End the end we just thought out the idea of what was better than whatever else, digital reel vs. midi, whatever... and went with whatever we thought would help us. We didn't let ourselves hold ourselves back, which is, I believe, what liberated us.

I think we thought or knew there was a lot riding on it, but there always is. I'm glad it's taken a life of its own. Hopefully it becomes bigger than it is already. It shows not that we can make a hit, or even a few hits, but also that we can connect with people.



Do you see yourself looking at future works and saying "Why can't you be more like Softy over there."

FUTURE PRODIGAL SONS

I think the new stuff, the next stuff that we do will be different, but using the things I hope we've learned, which is for me: "It's easy to not sell records." I don't know whether the next record will sell, but if you work hard there are people ready and waiting and they're saying "Here's my 15 bucks. What am I going to do with it?"

Y'know, I get sucked into that show VH1: Behind the Music. I can't stop watching it, never miss it. Each one is about different people, different bands, but if you take notes, like I have been, they all have the same story!! They all make the same mistakes right out of the gate and land in the same situation. You'd think they'd watch the show. They're always so surprised!! and they belt out this sermon that comes out like Rock PSA. "The public will lift you up and then drop you!!" Like they were the first. Everyone thinks they'll be the next Elvis, Pink Floyd. A lot of the common thread is so idiotic. What did you think, did you think you'd get away with it? If you spend all of your money, you won't have it anymore. Year after year people don't seem to get it. You can't make million sellers every time.

Do you ever do a show like one of those where you've got all these cars and just think right before all of it happens "Oh, shit... we're about to look like a bunch of dumbasses!! That people will think 'who are these assholes???"

EVERYTIME!!!

FATE UP AGAINST WILL

That feeling was sharpened into a fine point at the Roskilde Festival, outside Copenhagen, Denmark. We'd done that festival and at that point had been without Ronald for a little while and played a few shows just a 3-piece. We were fairly comfortable and ready to continue that way without adding extra weight just for the sake of an extra guitar. They called us and said that what they really wanted us to do was the parking lot experiment, so we said "Okay." Me and Steve and Wayne and Scott, our manager flew to Denmark with suitcases full of cassette tapes and at least 20 megaphones. We weren't really sure how a field with cars attached to mic stands would sound. We got there and it was a little airport and all the cars showed up right there outside of the plane. We were all set to go, drove 20 cars into the back of the audience, boxing them into the stage.

Now, in the fervor of the situation, right before it all goes down, you

don't have to think about too much, because you're so preoccupied. You're concerned with how the mechanics are working, whether everything's in order, whether all these suitcases of tapes are rewound and not damaged and labeled properly. You don't think about this performance. Anyway, we were all set and all done. Ready to go. But then suddenly we all were looking at each other like "What the hell are we doing here? We'll look like idiots. Aren't we supposed to be a band? Are we trying to put something over on people?" That moment we started thinking as if we weren't the ones doing it, but that's what saved us, because, yeah... it is weird.



Whether it be for their Big hit "She don't use jelly," their widely acclaimed record "the Soft Bulletin," the experimental concerts that utilize the very things that usually put some distance between the artist and the listener in a way that actually brings them closer, or for more of a general type feeling of "oh yeah, that was the only real art rock band of the 80's, 90's, or (whatever they're gonna call them)..." What will the Flaming Lips will be remembered for?

THE FEAR OF THE FOOTNOTE

I think time is on our side. We've decided we'd continue doing what it is we like doing, because, obviously, we can battle first impressions. Some people will remember "She Don't Use Jelly," and nothing else, but we're not embarrassed by it. It happened to become big.

Does that make it worse? I don't think so. It's a good song and, if you're interested in it, it will draw you into us. We've got a hell alot more work to do; we have no end to the ideas, but I think we are at this point still just a footnote. In fact I know we are to some people... just the other day I saw a book call us a footnote in rock history!!! I said "Hey that's not cool!" but then it's not really for me to say. I like to think in some ways we're influencing things; I think things are starting to happen that we like, but whether it's us or not? Who knows? These sounds are on commercials now, distorted vocals, strange drum sounds, we have used these sounds before. Is it us? these things sure make it interesting. I don't know whether we try or whether we just like to stay ahead of the curve and not be behind it. -DLG

TASTE TEST

This is a symposium of those who agree to disagree: Brian Spatola (of Paradise Records), Kellie Roach (the Jane Goodall of IndieRock), Jei Thomas (Backbiter), Scott Chrichlow (Lounge Lover), Fred Weaver (Hater of all), and your editor (moderator). Locked in a living room with these discs, some beer that suits not their fancy and a foul stench that emanates from Rusty's fucking stank ass room, they savored the flavor and reeled at the aftertaste of these new releases. [ED NOTE: these bitches wouldn't know a good record if it licked their balls whilst tickling their taints with a feather.]

Franklin Bruno *Kiss Without Makeup (Absolutely Kosher)*

The Bouquet: K: If I had a hammer... I'd hammer in the morning...

B: The Production is good. It sounds like the Bare Naked Ladies, but the production is better.

K: Cliched negative stereotypes!! It sounds like me, singing in the shower!!

J: He's trying to fill every genre. Turn this shit off!!

Flavor: Frank Black, Wilco, Ross Beach, Barenaked Ladies, Ban Folds Five, Elvis Costello

Finish: After taste too bitter too finish.

All American Radio / Somerset *Instrument Landscapes (Burnt Toast Vinyl)*

AAR

Bouquet: S: I like this much more than the previous CD.

J: I like the box, it looks like a resume. I like girls better than guys. It sounds like the drummer is better than he has to be.

B: This is a very bored drummer in a band that he doesn't like.

S: I generally like strings, but this isn't doing anything for me.

K: They sound medieval.

DLG: I bet you'd all love it if it was Slobot...

Flavor: Pixies, Archers, Veruca Salt, No Doubt, Candlebox

Finish: Probably good live. [ed. note: If I were reviewing this CD it would fare a helluva lot better.]

Somerset

Bouquet: S: I really like this.

K: I like it. It reminds me of the Archers too. If the lyrics are good, I'll love it-I can't hear them. I like the twang...

B: I like this a lot more.

S: They have an attitude

J: No they don't. This is pussy rock. I don't like it.

B: I usually like more electronic music.

Flavor: Flaming Lips, Husker Du, Archers

Finish: Damn fine.



Susanne Lewis (S/T)

Bouquet: K: I kinda like it... but I don't.

S: I don't like the way the lyrics are timed with the music.

K: "You really got me!" Kinks rip-off.

DLG: I like the guitars and that's it.

(Scott is holding his hands over his ears)

J: It's like she's trying to be meandering, but it's cookie-cutter-It doesn't flow.

Flavor: Joni Mitchell, Ricky Lee Jones

Finish: Could be tighter; very repetitive; wouldn't like it even if Slobot were playing it.

Franklin Bruno

Liberty 37 The Greatest Gift (Beggars Banquet)

Bouquet: J: I thought the LA Guns didn't exist anymore...
B: This is a cover.
S: So far I like it... I don't know.
K: Too breathy. It should be on "Party Of Five."
J: Exactly.
S: Prospects for pop metal.
K: Way too catchy.
J: Coke and groupies.
K: Fuck this. I don't like this at all.
B: They're all over the place.
J: These people listen to KLSU, don't they.
(Fred enters)
F: My opinion? On this? I don't have an opinion... well, I mean I don't... Shit this is just a wash of every genre of heavy guitar rock. They have no sound of their own.

Flavor: Stone Temple Pilots, Pixies, Tool, Live, the Cult, Huey Lewis and the News

Finish: If they don't get put on a soundtrack, they will die a slow cutout, bargain bin and used CD death.

Ply Somewhere Beyond Farewell (Burnt Toast Vinyl)

Bouquet: K: I think this sounds like the Flaming Lips (wild disagreement by all)
F: I shouldn't say anything... but it all sucks. I have no opinion... or my opinion is that it all sucks.
J: They thank God? What are they Prince? I have a problem here! They're fakin' it.
S: I have no opinion. I was just in church.
K: Why does everyone sound like the Archers of Loaf?
DLG: You don't have but eight CD's... and some Archers records.
K: I'm so poor... I've sold all of my CDs.

Flavor: Soul Asylum, Archers of Loaf, Flaming Lips

Finish: Over-rehearsed garage band that sounds nothing like the Flaming Lips.

Palomar (S/T)

Bouquet: J: WAIT! I like this! I like this a lot!
F: Too much tape hiss and ground hum.
S: Fuck... I don't know...
B: (to Fred) You'd love this if you'd heard what we've had to listen to.
F: That's the chick from the Cranberries. Listen to that.
S: They DO sound a lot like SLOBOT!!
J: If I went into a club and paid \$5 to see this, I'd be happy.
like entertainment. The name is close to Malomar and Power Bar... They're nutritious and delicious!

Flavor: Fuzzy, Slobot, Blake Babies, Joy Division

Finish: Best of the lot, which rhymes with Slobot.



Liberty 37

Mycomplex If We Keep Moving (Headhunter / Cargo)

Bouquet: F: They remind me of Ox, but not as good.
B: They picked up a speed metal drummer and... it's really cluttered.
J: I've studied music for years and I can't even figure out what time signature this is in. I can't follow it.
S: I don't like it at all... but then I don't listen to this type of music.
F: I could listen to this... Can I have it? Thanks!
K: This is mamsy pamsy... I just wanted to say that. "Mamsy pamsy..."
F: Oh, it's on Cargo, same as Pitchblende. No wonder.
B: Too loud, but I like it.

Flavor: Ox, Husker Du, Sparkley V, Earth Crisis, Garden Variety

Finish: Messy, but ultimately satisfying to any sort of heady punk lover.

FREE ASSOCIATION

Computer —headache. Cat - cat shit and claws. Mardi Gras - bare breasts. Wal-Mart - rednecks and long lines. Chimes Street - Smitty. Car - a red Geo Metro that won't fucking start and stays parked at my girlfriend's apartment and ...anyway, you get the picture. Here are the albums I got last month. Let's see how well the band's name really matched their sound. There were some interesting connections.

Khan, *Passport* (Matador Records) - When I think of the name "Khan," I, alongside everyone else who has reviewed his work, think of Genghis Khan or The Wrath of Khan. These words connote figures of mammoth proportions, somewhat barbaric, ugly, but powerful and advocating change. Well, these don't really have anything to do with Can Oral (a.k.a. Khan), the German-born immigrant who now resides in New York. Although he has produced a mammoth-sized portfolio of work, and runs the powerful and most influential record store in New York (Temple Records), his music is anything but barbaric. Having received much critical attention for his first Matador release 1-900-GET-KHAN (much of it, unfortunately, focusing on the real working sex hotline than on the actual music), he assembled this latest record as a sort of overall view for the uninformed about his diversity of styles. Operating under a variety of pseudonyms (H.E.A.D., 4E, Cube 40, Global Electronic Network, PSI-Project, Mass-Turbator, Black Sabbath Riot, Gizz T.V., Bizz O.D.), Khan is what he calls his *ubersicht*, or his "over-eye." Which is basically what *Passport* boils down to in the end. Khan applies impeccable technique, mixing beats and loops, adding drum & bass, acid, club, anything and everything, even some operatic solos; the main thing, however, is that the album is not a conglomeration of sounds, but a wonderful assemblage of technique and sound that works well.

Bows, *Blush (Too Pure)* - The word "Bows" gives me the impression of decoration, something extra that fits nicely - not too much, but you know that something would be missing without it. Likewise, the band Bows, which is technically one guy named Luke Sutherland, fits the name-free-association-game nicely. Reminiscent of the drum & bass forefathers in Bristol, Bows creates landscapes with the tight fusion of different beats. Where this band takes off is the more acute placement of sound on horns and strings. It doesn't sound so much hip-hop as the others, or so much jazz as the others; but it sounds like all of them at the same time. Definitely check out the title track, "Aquavella," and "It'll Be Half Time In England Soon."

Andrea Parker, *Kiss My Arp (Mo Wax)* - Andrea Parker sounds a lot like, well, Andrea Parker. So this time I'll go with the album title and that particularly sounds rather angry. Call me crazy. This is not an angry album though. In fact, I'm divided about this one because half of it, the Andrea Parker singing half of it, sounds so much like Portishead, except for the better singing of Beth Gibbons, that all I hear are Portishead lines. The other half, the David Morley and Andrea Parker half where she doesn't sing is terrific. The album does brood a little, but it does not resort to anger. Yes, it definitely broods.

Ok, the rest of these don't pass, so I'll go rather quickly... **Nautical Themes, *All Things Must Fly* (Collective Recordings)** - the name says it all. Something very much like listening to synthesizers underwater, in your sleep.

Tried to listen to the album three times and fell asleep before the fourth song. **The Electronic Tribute to Pink Floyd (Vitamin)** - Two things a tribute album should

never do are simply cover the songs, or try to improve on them. This one doesn't do either. However, only Pink Floyd fans would get even a laugh out of it; otherwise, this won't win many converts. **Radiant Decay: A tribute to Nine Inch Nails (Vitamin)** - Same idea as the previous record, and from the same people with boring results. Bad timing and bad covers.

Men's Recovery Project, *Boldes over Basra (Load)* - Guys from Six Finger Satellite merge with Men's Recovery Project to write songs about airport security, terrorism, pollution, advanced clap, and general filth in the Middle East. —Jim Gaddy



Kahn



Men's Recovery Project

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Blastic Pubble *Gravity, Reality, and Related Compounds* (Half-Mass)

There will be people that tell you that shoddy recordings of non-songs like this collection have some merit. It's art not-rock, and on some level it's experimental, seemingly improvised music that doesn't seem to go anywhere at all. If you really like something that you can only call "damn weird," go out and find last year's *Music Tapes* record. It's not worth listening to either, in my opinion, but it's a little less of a waste of time and money. This sounds like sixth graders playing with a casio tone and two opposing tape decks. I suppose that's what innovative about it? -DLG

Lushlife is neither varied nor organic. The duo has left behind their open, swirling guitar sound for a much more clinical and processed electronica sound. Gone are the days of drone. These are the days of radio possibilities. For some reason, be it the incorporation of a long-wished for Pro-Tools setup into their songwriting process, or that they forgot that too much of a good thing is bad, by hook or crook all the songs on *Lushlife* have exactly the same structure. This may fall into the "not the kind of album that I was hoping for" category, but still by any other yardstick it's a good album worth listening to. Despite the more commercial attitude (you can hear all the vocals! c'mon! that's half their sound gone right there!) and the less imaginative structure of the album as a whole, it's still better than half the electronics out there, and has enough compromise that it can be played on the radio (even here!). So I guess that's a good thing. Right? Do yourself a favor and pick up their older releases too (instead/first!) though. -Z

Bureau of Dissonant Culture, 1999

This is a compilation featuring four different bands (Afragola, T. Cylinder, Remote Control Yeti, E-Rex) that are "NOT looking to become rock stars," but instead are looking for "demimondes of enlightened ears and minds to be found amongst the bovine populace." Each of the bands on this compilation is basically of the electronic/techno variety of music. Samples and drum machines abound, though "real" instruments are often used as well. This compilation is a mixed bag as far as quality goes. Some of the stuff is pretty interesting while some is almost painful to listen to. -Kyle Bravo



Bowery Electric

Bowery Electric *Lushlife* (Beggars Banquet)

I foresee Bowery Electric blowing up thanks to this album (getting popular, not exploding). It's a well crafted and accessible listen. It's also a real disappointment. Why? Well, not just because I've been a big fan ever since my awesome girlfriend turned me on to them a few years ago, although I'm sure that's part of it. The fact is, as great as *Lushlife* may sound, it's not Beat, or for that matter their 1st, self-titled release. The stopgap in between Beat(their wonderfully varied first attempt to merge their trademark fog of guitars with sequenced beats) was the excellent *Blow Up 12"*, which was a beautiful and organic way for the band to leave you wanting more. Unfortunately,



Busy Signals

The Busy Signals- *Baby's First Beats* (Sugar Free)

This is pretty indie rock - perhaps the word "twee" is applicable- mixed with samples, tongue in cheek scratches, and the aforementioned "beats". If that doesn't sound too exciting, well, it's actually an enjoyable mixture. Hearing strains of Beck, Velvet Underground, & Kurtis Blow together shouldn't be anything but pleasant if it's done right. The samples used are good and the vocals are that kind of Mercury Rev/Flaming Lips kind of squeaky yearning that actually works for one out of every 50 people that try to go there. I'll listen to this more, I think. Also, some of the nicest cover art/packaging of anything I've reviewed all month... Should appeal to fans of the current Emperor Norton style happy electronica and, conversely, Cub. -Z

REVIEWS

Calexico *The Black Light* (Quarterstick)

Calexico is the remnants of Tucson, AZ. bands such as Giant Sand and Friends of Dean Martinez (e.g. Dan Convertino, Howe Gelb, Joey Burns). In fact, it's really difficult to tell you what makes this band much different than Friends of Dean Martinez with their spaghetti-western-soundtrack and lounge-sounding atmospheric songs punctuated by sweeping slide guitars. Compared to FODM this is somewhat less structured and the songs tend to ramble on. Vocals are only intermittent and I would argue somewhat extraneous. It's still pretty good though. However, I would recommend it as something you might enjoy falling asleep to as opposed to something you'd listen to actively. Oh yes, indeed, their fine music can uncoil even the most rigid bowel producing nearly instantaneous and explosive regularity. -Tom King

Cat Power *The Covers Record* (Matador)

Chan Marshall, who is Cat Power, has a great voice and can pen great, provocative minimalist songs. On this record, she tackles songs by a bunch of different sources (Bob Dylan, Nina Simone, Lou Reed, Moby Grape, Smog, herself) and uses the parts that she liked and identified with and junks the rest. Her vocals communicate melancholy like few others can, and who would have thought that we ever needed to hear another version of "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," but lo and behold the version here breathes new life and quiet desperation into the number, and puts the message across without ever using the songs chorus once. Pick this up and put it on the next time you pull up a chair and sit down to watch a rainy day through your window. [Matador Records 625 Broadway New York, New York 10012 www.matadorrecords.com] - Mark E. Moon

THE FAMILY JERKUS



"I wanna be a flamingo. I'd wear
PINK all the time."



Cat Power

Cats and Jammers *After School Special* (Beluga)

When I was in college and the third They Might Be Giants album came out, all the critics in the world had had enough. *Lincoln* was a masterpiece, but *Flood*, it was just too much, too clever. I thought, "How can you be too clever?" I really didn't get it until *Apollo 13*. It really was just too much. I'd confused clever with intelligent. Smart is knowing what the word hesitates means; clever is using the word out of context to confuse your younger brother. "I saw you hesitating in the back yard. I'm telling mom." It's probably part of the reason that I hated Weezer the first time it came on MTV, and it's the same reason that every kid who hears *After School Special* will shit himself. This is punk for ninth graders made by honors kids in college. Expect to hear it on "Malcolm In The Middle" when the kids finally turn on TMBG. -DLG



Cat and Jammers

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Cole Idea of City (MoodFood)

The problem with many of today's smarter rock bands is that they always seem to have too much else going on in their lives (When will we hear another disc from Chavez?) In the case of Chapel Hill trio Cole, the world of graduate-level education is what's robbing the world of what sounds like it's one hell of a live act. The bands' basic approach is to churn out Slint/Rodan-type loud/soft shifts, and drop some Girls Against Boys-style

vocals and grooves in the middle of it all. The band has a good ear for texture and knows a good riff when it hears one, but when they just play around with a straighter chord pattern and tempo in "Redressus," the results are catchy as hell. Hopefully, the dissertations are almost finished. [MoodFood Records 1381 Kildaire Farms Road, Suite 246, Cary, North Carolina 27511 www.moodfood.com] - Mark E. Moon

Crooked Fingers Crooked Fingers (Warm)

One sort of bad thing about reviewing records is that the person doing so really should to listen to them a few times before he/she does so—the reviewing—which, through so doing might make for some conditioning in the reviewer's brain and senses and thus, he/she may end up liking an album that he/she originally thought was crap. Not that I necessarily thought this album—the first effort by ex-Archers of Loaf lead croaker Eric Bachmann and ex-M...OAM? spaz Brian Causey (FKA 'StarCrunch')—was crap, but it sounds a lot like Tom Waits and, well...did anything ever rock harder than Archers of Loaf? Sure, there's always Slayer, but the Archers wore glasses, and anybody who wears glasses and rocks that hard is just on time, if you know what I mean. As a foot note to this review which is actually not a foot note, because it's sort of included in the body of the actual review, the fine editor of this even finer publication told me a few days ago over the phone that he doesn't really like reviews wherein the reviewer uses the word "rock" a lot. "Why are you telling us this, James?" you're asking, and I'll just go ahead and let you know that it's because I wanted to show off what an incredible rebel I am. And I'm not even a teenager anymore! Oh, and also because of that really cool part on "Harnessed in Slums" (from the Archers masterpiece, 95's 'Vee Vee') when the music stops and Bachmann just hits this one chiming harmonic note and they go right back into it. That just fucking rocks way harder than the Bachmann-Causey Underdrive. -James VanWay

Deathcab for Cutie *Something About Aeroplanes* (Elsinor/Barsuk)

I've seen these fuckers live a couple times out on the west coast and all I can tell you is that they're fantastic. Nearly every song on this CD is perfection. Most the music is clean, mid-tempo, minimal, and moody (almost mid-80s...don't be put off by that) with compression on the vocals and reverberating guitars, no synthesizers. The best on here are "Your Bruise" and "Champagne From a Paper Cup." Live, they look like they're all about 14 years old with their goofy happy-to-be-here-nerd stage presence (not contrived), but they seem to effortlessly knock out brilliantly written

original songs like a darker more modern version of XTC crossed with Superchunk. I also wouldn't hesitate to say Deathcab has a rather British sound going although I can't quite put my finger on what it is. Over the last year they've been getting loads of press in the Seattle/Portland areas and I wouldn't be surprised to hear their name all around the country is a year or two. -Tom King

Distortion Felix *I Am An Athlete* (Alias)

I think it's pretty funny and strange how every couple of years someone pops up to remind us all just how irresistible the simple technique of burying a good, catchy melody under a storm of noise actually is. Yeah, you can think early Jesus and Mary Chain all over again if you want, but Los Angelinos Distortion Felix have a little more might and bottom end to the hurricane of sound wrapping itself around the bands' songs. Steve Albini's engineering (the album was produced by Francis Miranda) catches every squeal of the combo's over-amplified guitar and bass. Supposedly, singer/guitarist Manuel Nieto runs his voice and guitars through a bunch of effects pedals and a four-track cassette recorder to get the right amount of noise on everything. My favorite track would be "Red Lips," where, over a solid drumbeat, the bass sounds like an engine being redlined and the guitar approximates the howl of the air rushing

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REVIEWS

by. Come on, let's fall for it all over again! [Alias Records 1/2 Riverside Dr. #115, Toluca Lake, CA 91602 www.aliasrecords.com] - Mark E. Moon

Duochrome *Tactical Knives* (Vital Cog)

This album is done well enough, but lacks any imagination. If you're afraid that Pavement might really break up this time and want a surrogate batch of indie pop slackers, this could fill the bill for you, in a by-the-numbers imitation way. Myself, I'm remembering how Slanted and Enchanted wasn't really done that well, but had a lot of imagination. [Vital Cog Records PO Box 7846, Princeton, NJ 08543 www.vitalcog.cog] - Mark E. Moon

Hefner *Boxing Hefner*

(Beggars Banquet / Too Pure)

Hefner hasn't broken into the American public's consciousness yet, although they've enjoyed some popularity in Europe for about 2 years. This makes the idea of a 'rarities and B-sides' record rather dubious- they did just release their second record *The Fidelity Wars* last year. This is not to say that Boxing Hefner isn't a good record. On the contrary, it's attempt to improve on existing recordings of early singles like "Christian Girls," their very first b-side, make me wish that I read Melody Maker more often; I might've caught Hefner the first time round. Point is, I have to wonder if this isn't the import equivalent of Foghat's *Double Live*. Hopefully American listeners won't ignore the disc as a rehash, but then if they know the difference, they probably love Britpop enough to pretend they've known about Hefner all along. -DLG



Huon *Songs For Lord Tortoise* (Animal World)

Be careful when sticking this in your CD-ROM drive to listen to, it starts the application immediately trying to get your computer online. Best to leave it to the stereo. I'm drawing a blank on the origins of this band, someone from the Raincoats, perhaps? Dreamy, alien, slo-mo, lo-fi pop, with a spinning Nintendo backdrop. -DLG

Kevlar *Let Me Worry Somemore* (The First Time)

Sweden's Kevlar remind me a lot of Burning Airlines and Jawbox, and for me that's not a bad thing at all. Some good, powerful rock playing with great hooks and dissonant bits that pop up in just the right places. I know this is a short review, but I want to go listen to this disc again. Goodbye. [The First Time Records P.O. Box 8052, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8052 www.tfrrecords.com] - Mark E. Moon

Knodel *The White Hole* (Spongebath)

Not only does Knodel claim to come from a black hole, they claim they're from black holes in the future. Wow, that's heady stuff. *"We are more advanced than you"* Really. Knodels first album comes immediately off as a Trans-Am knockoff. In trying to one up Trans-Am's signature Vocoder/Moog bass/kickass drum assault, Knodel evidently stumbled across what is to be their schtick, *humor*. And it really works. No less than five songs on *The White Hole* actually have their band name in the title (Knodel Dance Party, Knodel In Stereo, Knodel World, etc.) which is somewhat akin to wearing your own bands t-shirt at your own bands shows. These guys lay it on thick too. Imagine Mark Mothersbaugh channeling the spirit of a dead Wierd Al Yankovic through broken Commodore 64's. Despite all of the jokes and "funny shit," Knodel has assembled an albums' worth of very well crafted pop songs, instantly listenable, and terribly entertaining. *Out-fuckin'-rageous*. -RD



Lauri Kranz

Lauri Kranz *How To Disappear* (Elastic Ruby)

There's something to be said for the brooding, brokenhearted young singer/songwriter, especially when her voice is this good and you know what she looks like. Yeah, it's true. It really helps. Mind you, Lauri Kranz isn't into angry Alanis Morissette-bitching (well, one exception might be "Lucky One," but that one's not really close). She's pensive and vulnerable. Her voice is a little reminiscent of Tori Amos, only more real, or how about unpretentious... I must point out that a cursory scan across the tracks paints a much different picture than listening to the entirety of any one particular song. When I first listened to it, I thought it was relatively depressing. Every song was quiet, moody, and sparse. I thought drummer Ric Menck (Velvet Crush / occasionally Matthew Sweet and Liz Phair) was a little underused. When I realized that the songs don't really pick up immediately that's when I suddenly discovered Menck hiding behind the intro. I didn't notice how poppy "Adam One Afternoon" was the first time I heard it. To be sure, this little trick isn't very commercially viable. On the other hand, it does wonders for the feel of the record. So, if you plan on going to the CD Wharehouse listening station and blip blip blipping across "How To Disappear" trying to decide between this and something with more balls, do yourself a favor. Listen to more than just the first 45 seconds of whatever your finger stops on. They won't kick you out for sitting there for a while. They do get pissed if you bring your lunch with you. -DLG

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Macha *See It Another Way* (Jetset)

Alright, goddammit this is Tom King and not the pseudonym Tom King. Now that we have that straightened out, let me tell you about Macha. Macha is something like Can had they attempted to play world music. Despite being yet another band from Athens, GA., they appear to have no connection whatsoever to the Elephant Six machine that so overtly dominates and mediocretizes that scene. The inside cover features a picture of a durian, which is perhaps the most disgusting tropical fruit imaginable. The inside photograph further indicates that they're a bunch pretty serious looking guys. Then, an advertisement reveals the contents of the Jetset label they share with other such disasters as Mogwai and Prolapse. Given the state of modern music they are comparatively original and musically interesting, but the slick production and the abominable lyrics get under my skin somethin' fierce. I'm afraid that all the good songs on here are the instrumental such as "Until your temples are pounding" and "Between stranded sonars." I'll leave it at that. Whew, I just made it through an entire review without thinking the word "crotch". -Tom King

Make Up *Save Yourself* (K)

If you like the Make Up a bunch, you should ask yourself why. If you don't like them, you should loosen up and ask yourself why not. Ian Svennus and crew work with the premise that there's nothing wrong with modern society that surrendering yourself with a gospel like fervor to the sounds of garage/psychedelic/soul/funk of the 60's and 70's couldn't work on out. The band's music is certainly enjoyable, but doesn't really evoke deep thought. Then again, that's probably what got us into this mess in the first place. [K Records Box 7154 Olympia, Wash. 98507 www.kpunk.com] - Mark E. Moon

MC Paul Barman *It's Very Stimulating* (Word Sound)

The other day I was sitting outside of a cafe', smoking a cigarette when this bum who perenially hangs outside of there, shirtless, with his Old Navy(?) sweater tied around his waste, asked me if he could bum a smoke. I gave him one and then he told me that his van had gotten impounded in New Orleans the previous weekend. "Cruel fate, man," he said, and I was just sitting there thinking, "Cruel Fate! That would make a rad name for a heavy metal band!" But then he interrupted my fantasies of big hair and make-up and lots of things neon-colored by telling me, in exchange for the cigarette he would bestow upon me a really funny joke, and it went a little something like this: "Did you know white people invented rap music? It's called square dancing!" I told him I didn't really get it and went back to picturing teased hair and boys who looked way better in lipstick than Bowie ever did and...

..So I'm a big hip-hop fan, but I've never really liked any white rappers, none that I can think of anyway. Maybe it's some sort of weird, reverse, inclusive racism. Or maybe it's just that they've all sucked. Remember N2Deep? Sure you do, y'know, "Yo, G, back to the Hotel." Boy, that song sure was killer.

But Paul Barman's Jewish, so maybe he's excluded from the Curse of the Rapping Honky. At least his debut EP, 'It's Very Stimulating' would suggest

this. Produced by Prince Paul (which I must admit is at least half of the reason why this is so good), 'Stimulating' is about 20 minutes of some of the worst mic skills paired with the funniest lyrics this side of Kool Keith. Witness: "I'm a Hunter-Gatherer/A cunt-er latherer", "I was walking down the street looking at boobs, asses, faces/When I went into Salvation Army for some used glasses cases/There by the doorway was an old map of Norway/the girl at the counter flipped it over and the message read 'You're Gay'". For real, dog, this guy is hard. On himself. -James Vanway

Melochrome *The Music We Make* (Loose Thread)

This record has some really good stuff on it. It has a lot of My Bloody Valentine guitar on it, but it's a little more conventional. Vocalist Darlene Poole has a beautiful voice that, when played against the almost male vocals of Pramod Tummala, could make a beer jingle break your heart. - D.L.G

Microwaves *Don't Wake Me Up* (K)

This album is everything from soft and sweet to totally rocking and is a delicious listen all the way. Low-fi artsy pop rock that's definitely worth checking out. A wide variety of instruments and samples are used yet the tender, subtle vocals bring it all together nicely and give it consistency. This is some really good stuff. -Kyle Bravo

Takako Minekawa- *Fun9* (Emperor Norton record)

So people are trying to make connections with pre-existing pop musicians when they describe Ms. Minekawa: "The Japanese Bjork?" one e-bay member wrote about an earlier album he was trying to sell to people who had most likely never heard of the talented lass. The thing is, you can't blame the poor unimaginative sucker for his comparison- there are similarities: a beautiful & quirky ethnic voice, inventive recording techniques, and well constructed electronic pop (and not so pop). That's not all, even though it's enough to make *Fun9* (supposedly pronounced "funk" according to Emperor Norton's info) a good listen. God is in the details, as someone once said and that's where this album excels. In general a lot more funky than anything Icelandic, the songs here were all either self produced or in collaboration with DJ Me DJ You (the guys from *Sukia?*), Cornelius, and Michiko Endoh. I have grown very fond of her soft sweet voice (which isn't so baby doll chic as *Kahimi Karie*) and the electronica on display here is tight, inventive, and when it does it's funk thing it's never cheesy (in the wrong way). It also helps for once to have so many hands in the making of this album, because what might have grown stale in the different producer's approach to song/sound writing over the course of an album is the perfect balance of elements here. So, if the fact that I like this isn't justification enough for you to run out and buy (or at least listen to) it, I'd recommend this to people who enjoy Bjork, Stereolab, Beck et al, moog fetishists and those who have been waiting for a new Cornelius album. DUH! - Z

Modest Mouse *Building Nothing Out Of Something* (Up)

This isn't a new Modest Mouse record, rather a collection of tracks mainly from the prolific bands singles and c.p.s. I guess this is a farewell of sorts to the Up label (the bands next record is due out in the near future on Epic). I

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always thought that this band had the potential to be huge, mainly because unlike, say, Pavement or Built To Spill, they don't seem as if they want to avoid larger success. Due to the stitched together nature of this disc, it doesn't have the loose yet cohesive feel that makes the band's proper albums so addictive, but it serves as a nice position marker as the they prepare to take a big step career-wise. [Up Records PO Box 21328 Seattle, Washington 98111-3328 www.uprecords.com] - Mark E. Moon

Mogwai EP + 2 (Matador)

Scottish lads Mogwai were hailed as the next big thing a while back, which was a huge burden to throw on a group of teenagers, even if they were making grown up music. The early single made quite a buzz in the IndieRock scene, mostly for their ability to toss sounds all over the place without losing control. A slow introspective track followed by an attack of guitars was what you got. The hype was all true. Believe it. But then Mogwai suffered the inevitable backlash that was bound to come, mostly because of their US debut "Young Team." Most of that sentiment has softened over the years and Mogwai found themselves on the top again with *Come On Die Young*.

They went into the studio to play around with some ideas, but the tapes came out so well that they went ahead and released the 4 new songs as an EP. For the US market, Matador tacked on two older songs that the Mogwai completist should already own. The 4 new ones are pure bliss, direct descendants of the crown jewel of *Come On, Helps Both Ways*. Simple but complex textures abound, especially on the brilliant "Christmas Song" and the sprawling "Burn Girl Prom Queen." Do yourself a favor and track this down. Mogwai are the real deal, and after you hear this, you might be looking for their older stuff, if you don't have it already. -Rob Rioux

Morphine *The Night* (Dreamworks)

When I first heard Morphine, I was obsessed with it. That was *Cure For Pain*. I saw them supporting that album and it was at a time when heroin was getting chic again. It was right before Pulp Fiction came out. I didn't really enjoy *Yes*, but I saw some Tom Waits qualities that I found interesting enough. When I saw them after that I noticed they'd become the mother of all atrocities, a hippie band. Everything they did played into that funky chicken-dancing vibe. I was getting stepped all over and kicked and swung at, not by punks, but tripping deadheads flailing around, their appendages unchecked. I almost got into 3 fights that night. From then on I hated them. When I heard that Mark Sandman had died, I thought "He probably overdosed." Then I thought "They put out about 3 decent records, one of which I loved. I shouldn't be so hard on the guy." *The Night* completely solidified that thought for me. While there are still remnants of that funky sax strut that initially put me off, there's actually more worldly variety here than on *Cure*. It isn't really even as psychedelic as their earlier work when they appeared to espouse a pro-narcotic ideology.

It's as though Sandman grew up about a year before he died. I wish he'd matured sooner. -DLG

Non *Receive The Flame* (Mute)

Boyd Rice has been out on the fringes of "experimental and obscure sounds" for quite a long time now. Non is Rice's longest running project, and Mute has just release their newest sonic assault *Receive The Flame*. This is not easy listening. The opening track, "Alpha," is a good 4 minutes of

droning violin in the spirit of Tony Conrad. "Spectre" is a little bit more user friendly, and it is this track that is getting a little air play around these parts.

The CD seems to have been purposely sequenced to test the listener's willpower, because "Everlasting Fire" is just plain annoying. Then you get into "Soliute" an aptly named peaceful little interlude that bleeds right into "Monism," another near-schizophrenic sound experience.

In contrast with earlier works, there is more of a progression on *Receive*, to give credit where it is due. At the same time, you will be hard pressed to make it through this disc in one sitting. Besides Conrad, other frames of reference would be Krystof Penderecki, Monte Cazzaza, and mental illness. Be careful with this one and whatever you do make sure you have some one to spot you. For "audio oddities," you check out the new *Nurse With Wound*, instead: "An Awkward Pause." -Rob Rioux



Mogwai

Jim O'Rourke- *Halfway To A Threeway* (Drag City)

Jim O'Rourke has gone, in recent years, from being known as a chameleon-like experimental musician and jack-of-all-trades (producer, improv collaborator, etc.), to being an artist seemingly looking to create a certain kind of "perfect pop moment". Of course, what I don't know about pop music could fill a gallon jug, so I might be somewhat out of my element... Anyways, the *Threeway* EP builds upon the silky sound of last year's *Eureka*, starting out with "Fuzzy Sun" a straight up pop song. "Fuzzy Sun" has pleasant vocals and rhythmic underpinning, recalling *Eureka* almost as a bluff to those of us expecting simply more of the same. Shame on you (and me) - if nothing else, JO has always been a tireless experimenter. Not to imply that there's really too much variation from the set up, but "Not Sport, Marital Art" grooves a bit more - wearing the jazzy stripes guest Rob Mazurek brings to the fore, not to mention O'Rourke's own jumping around to play percussion (among other things). "The Workplace" is a pastoral sing along reminding me of *Eureka's* "Women of the World", and the title track takes us out in a folksy fug. Honestly, I just felt like writing that last bit of alliteration. So sue me. It's a slow burner of an album, but a winner nonetheless. -Z

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Pan American 360 Business / 360 Bypass (Kranky)

By now hopefully most of you have heard of (if not heard) Labradford, easily one of the most important bands out there. I'll resist the temptation to go on and on about how all of you should have everything they've ever put out. I'll save that for their next release, at least for my next beer. For now we have *360 Business / 360 Bypass*, the new CD from Pan American. You should know them as a side project of Labradford's Mark Nelson. This is their second proper full-length, after a few vinyl-only European releases. Pan Am's sound is distinct from Labradford's in that, when left on his own, Nelson brings a more organic sound to the mix, infusing elements of jazz, dub, and maybe even a hint of bossanova. On "Code," Nelson gets some vocals out of Alan Sparhawk and Mimi Parker of Low, a collaboration that's been a long time coming and well worth the wait. Rob Mazurek and Casey Rice of Tortoise bring an even more incestuous Chicago feeling when added to the line-up.

Listening to *360*, the word organic keeps popping up in my head. "Steel Stars" uses a simple but cool loop to give us some idea of what is to come. By the time you've made it all the way through to "Both Ends Fixed," you are reaching for the repeat button. Whether or not you're familiar with Labradford, Tortoise, or Low, this CD stands alone. - Rob Rioux

Pilot To Gunner Hit The Ground and Hum (Metoo!)

Former members of the Madelines, Pilot To Gunner dish out good, post-punk rock in the manner of Mission of Burma/Jawbox/Burning Airlines/Garden Variety. Actually, the artwork and bandname seem very reminiscent of Burning Airlines, but these guys put their own stamp on this style of music with good, unique hooks and vocals. I guess the highest compliment I can give this e.p. is that I have to force myself to stop playing it over and over. Really good stuff. I can't wait to hear a longer effort.

[Metoo! Records 915 Cole Street #257 San Francisco, CA 94117
www.metoorecords.com] - Mark E. Moon

Plone Music for Beginner Piano (Matador)

This is basically cocktail party music for WIRED magazine staff parties. And I mean that in the nicest way possible. Warm analogue synth pads swing into the hazy sunset of Logan's Run. Always pleasant, never confrontational- good for necking if you're so inclined. Although I wonder about the spice in your sex life if you actually use this as a Slowjam. Whatever. Cute Aphex Twin outtakes. Am I too harsh? I do like this, you know. It just bums me out that it's really quite good electronica, but once you get through the first few songs, you know what the deal is, and it doesn't ever diversify itself. There are some excellent songs, "Plock" most notably, but as an LP, it makes a great EP. - Z

Tom Rapp *A Journal Of The Plague Year* (Rubric)

The Alchemysts and Simeon: *Simeon and The Alchemysts* (Rubric)

The Green Pajamas *Seven Fathoms Down And Falling* (Rubric)

The Lucky Bishops (Rubric)

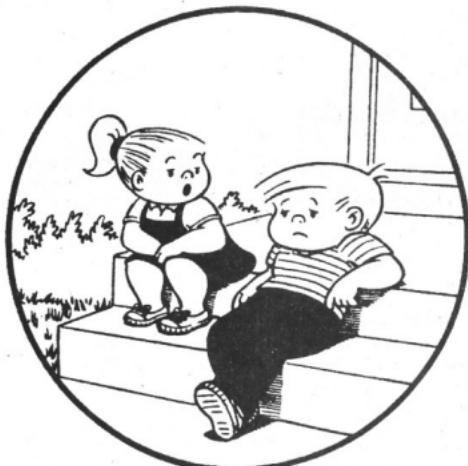
Have you noticed that everything released on an indie label in the last year and a half sounds (at very best) like Paul McCartney putting the Chronicles of Narnia into a three minute pop song? There are some out there who would have you believe that it started

with them, and so (they believe) there is a need to hear fairy tale rock from the people who created it, to hear it how it was meant to be...Knee-deep in the dark ages.

Only Nick Saloman (Bevis Frond) and Simeon (Silver Apples) could appreciate Tom Rapp's odd attempt to merge anachronistic medieval Hobbit bard anglophilia with poetic current event commentary, *A Journal of the Plague Year*. While I don't see what Kurt Cobain's death six years ago ("The Swimmer") has to do with this year's plague, I also don't feel strongly enough about him to write him his own "Vincent." Bob Dylan, Cat Stevens, Procol Harum and Don McLean fans in their late thirties on into their golden years, will get into the more accomplished, yet derivative, stuff on the album, primarily the Nick Saloman produced "Where Is Love?" Honestly, I think younger fans (there are a few) of the Silver Apples and Bevis Frond will probably appreciate this for its arty sweetness and sincerity, but I can't see them listening to it twice without Tom Rapp in the room spinning it himself. And it could happen.

It's just as likely to happen as the Silver Apples trying to recapture their prized place at the bottom of the English psychedelic noise of the 60's. This is more or less what The Alchemysts and Simeon: *Simeon and The Alchemysts* is all about. Note that when I say "the bottom," I mean they were seminal and reached cult status that made their vinyl releases valuable to collectors, but are in any case a footnote. Like the druids, they are ancient, spooky, and there's not a hell of a lot of attainable and culpable documentation on them. Covering more or less the same Apples ground at a more punk pace, this should re-establish them exactly where they're aching to be,

THE FAMILY JERKUS



"I'll bet you'd scold me if I put my thumb in my pie."

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dwindling in blissful obscurity, climbing the rung of footnotes in the trouser press, playing to 50-150 people a night, looking ahead to the promise of a rim-job from a 38-year-old record collector.

Now if the whole butterflies, dragons, and unicorns thing does it for you, there's a chance you might like the Green Pajamas' *Seven Fathoms Down and Falling*, although, frankly, the Rain Parade cum Jethro Tull sound is little like tripping in a van with people a good fifteen years older than you. Not anything I'd recommend. "She Doesn't Love You Anymore," is the only song here that sounds like it was written by someone not in that fucking van, and surprise... it's pretty good.

The Lucky Bishops self-titled disc is, well, more or less, the usual Elephant 6 ilk. Well done, good songs, melodies, accomplished arrangements, farfisa, fuzz, Rubber Soul and Piper at the Gates of Dawn, you know what it sounds like already, and since there are all kinds of people who are still buying into this sound, this is totally saleable. As for what it stands for, it's like the groundhog. Every time I see another disc that sounds like this, that's at least this good, I look forward begrudgingly to an even longer fairy tale rock winter. -DLG

Rare Avis *The Hospital Are Full*

Lafayette's favorite astral pilots have landed again for passengers. There's enough shouting and fuzzy blasts to fly the songs from Sid Barrett to Mercury Rev and back again, so get your passports... Sorry, but one or two trippy metaphors are relevant. Besides, Zack Soto can't write the review... he's on the recording, so, that's right out. When I do psychedelic record reviews you have to bear with me. After having stripped to a three-piece last year, Rare Avis has brought back the Urbosleeks' Jason Trahan into the fold, at least for the recording, as well as Slobot's Sherie Duhon. -DLG



Six By Seven

Six By Seven *The Closer You Get* (Beggar's Banquet)

This is one of those things that surprised me on my first listen- I actually like this! These guys have taken all the American aspects of Brit Pop (if there is such a thing) and capitalized on them. More inventive than Oasis, more balls than Blur and more dangerous than Pulp, while keeping what the British seem to know best- melody, with hooks more addictive than crack. It's so nice to see Britain cranking out good shit again, the way it used to be. I swear I hear U2 on this record as well. The scorchier numbers (Eat Junk Become Junk, Sawn Off Metallica T-Shirt) are superbly accentuated by the slower more introspective pieces (Another Love Song, One Easy Ship

Away) which seem strangely reminiscent of Mogwai's better stuff. *The Closer You Get* is a totally solid album that burns from beginning to end. --RD

Six By Seven *Ten Places To Die/England & And A Broken Radio (Mantra)*

This is one of those things that surprised me on my second listen- I actually like this! Radiohead-esque Brit Pop isn't my cup of tea, really, but SIX BY SEVEN have taken a few notes from the lessons of the space rockers and added a bit of tension to their set up. Semi-inventive use of the rock band setup (guitars, bass, drums & keyboard) to keep the sounds fresh. The keyboard player and the guitarist that makes all the crazy noises that have been mixed into the background should be complimented in this regard. With a touch of the more recent Spiritualized stuff and a Bowie cover (we should get them over here for a Jetbunny nite!), these guys will take over the world when they shrug off their pop influences and fly into a wall of noise with the Big Bopper. Or maybe we should all just start bands, then we could all get what we want out of music. -Z

Southerning- S/T (Histrionic)

Southerning make the kind of music that drives a lot of people batty, but



touches all the right buttons in this homey, yo. Deceptively simple sine waves & keyboard drones wash slowly over your drifting mind like a good warm analogue version of the Brain Cloud in Joe Versus the Volcano (remember that?) or a pleasant minimalist version of Nurse With Wound or Coil's eerie ambient. The front cover and spine only list the band's name, but the music on this disc has a title: "One Piece In Four Parts." The four parts, none shorter than 11

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minutes, ebb and flow seamlessly creating a pleasant womb-like environment for whatever activities you may or may not be doing at the time. One of the few bands to actually recommend listening to their music at a low volume, I just like to put it on (headphones work well too) and stare at the ceiling and begin to feel very content. Also of note is the fact that one of the two members of Southerning is the keyboard player of the much more active and sorely missed Jessamine. [southerning@mindspring.com] -Z

Sonny Sixkiller *This Is Your Heaven* (Vital Cog)

I don't feel good about saying the kids will probably love this, at least long enough to accidentally buy it at the record store listening booth thinking that it's The Darling Buds. There are at least six other non-killer bands that sound just like this: Fuzzy, Little Red Rocket, The Blake Babies / Julianna Hatfield, Versus. Suffice to say that if you like this kind of thing, you already own all these bands' records and you'll want this one as well. -DLG

Tension War Cry

You would think that an angry screamly hardcore punk rock band would

from the words of this album, yet they're still not enough (nor are they really even understandable for the most part) to make this worth your time. -Kyle Bravo

Thee Headcoats *The Messerschmitt Pilot's Severed Hand* (Damaged Goods)

For a traditional sounding punk band, Thee Headcoats lack any of the finesse of the Clash or the sardonic humor of the Dead Kennedys. In fact, Thee Headcoats would just be another noisy lo-fi British punk band if it weren't for the endearing live antics and silly lyrics of bandleader Billy Childish. One can tell that they've never been terribly concerned with achieving even a modicum of commercial success with their cluttered live 4-track recordings and the appearance of such songs as "We Hate the Fucking N.M.E.", "I've Been Fucking Your Daughters and Pissing On Your Lawn", or "Blood, Piss, and Sperm." My favorite on here is the second song entitled "A Beauty of Love that Splits the Body In Two" on which Billy explains, "I kiss your ass like the star of God. I commit my seed to the sod". Thee Headcoats do indeed have something special about them, but I wouldn't recommend this unless you really love em'. I would, however, strongly suggest seeing them live if you get the chance. Billy rarely disappoints. -Tom King

energize and excite listeners - get them all pumped up to stir up some shit, but all this album made me do was yawn. This might have been worth listening to 10 or 15 years ago, but nowadays this type of music comes a dime a dozen. I thought punk rock was about breaking rules and saying "fuck you" to outdated traditions. If that's the case then why are these guys still playing the same music they were playing a decade ago? The only redeeming thing about this album is the lyrics. Passion and conviction flow



Mary Timony *Mountains* (Matador)

When the prominent songwriter/voice of an established band issues a solo record, it's not unfounded for observers to wonder what exactly is the point. In the case of Helium frontwoman Mary Timony, it seems like the lady just likes to collaborate with different folks or combinations of her usual band, in this case her accomplice a multi-instrumentalist Christina Files of The Swirlies and Victory At Sea (Timony can also be heard currently as half of The Spells with Carrie Brownstein of Sleater-Kinney). While the slightly psychedelic, baroque pop played out here doesn't sound all that different from Helium, it does feel a little different than their last couple of efforts. Maybe Timony just didn't feel as much pressure working on these songs (she's been prone to attacks of studio perfectionism in the past) but the mood here seems lighter to me. Actually, I was kinda hoping this would be a real guitarists over-indulgence (she is one of the best players in the underground scene these days), but if Mary would rather offer up another set of fantasy-based lyrical musings than be Alan Holdsworth, I'm game. [Matador Records 625 Broadway New York, New York 10012 www.matadorrecords.com] - Mark E. Moon

Jon Todd (S/T) (Magic Eye Singles)

"Jon Todd" are three gentlemen from Jacksonville, FL - credits the booklet with this disc, and to finish it for them - who play instrumental rock music with lots of room left for improvisation. It seems strange that improvisation is such a rare thing to find in rock bands these days, but I guess that's the legacy of punk rock. But cutting out the unnecessary indulgences that didn't go anywhere shouldn't deter musicians from searching for ways to expand their music and surprise themselves. Jon Todd set up good premises and then work to take them somewhere new, paying close attention to one another and actually interacting with each other musically (unfortunately, another rare thing these days). These studio performances, produced by Martin Bisi (who has worked with Sonic Youth and others) sound great and get across the sparks the band is capable of generating live. [Magic Eye Singles PO Box 603033 Providence, RI 02906] - Mark E. Moon



Two Dollar Guitar Weak Beats and Lame-Ass Rhymes (Smells Like)

It's hard to think of one single important selling point to this little gem. It could be that it flips the alt. country genre on its side even better than the Silver Jews, or that it's a collection of some extremely sarcastic humor set to eerily beautiful music, or that it gathers together great Indie Rockers like Tim Prudhomme of Fuck with extra-national stars like Christina Rosenvinge. If anything, though, there is a reason *not* to just run out and get it. This isn't a Sonic Youth side project, even though Steve

Shelley plays drums on the record. Tim Foljahn and Shelley have been playing this stuff since they were teenagers growing up in the same

New Jersey suburb. Those expecting to here a wash of distorted and oddly tuned guitars should take caution.

Alas, the best reason to go out and find it would be Tim Foljahn's timelessly naughty songsmithing. Songs like "Wilding" and "Everybody's In A Band" make me almost positive he's gotten head in an unmaiden bed at the Chelsea hotel (Leo Cohen rip... sorry, it had to be done). While Janet Wygal, Carla Bozulich, and Ms. Rosenvinge have lovely voices to listen to, Foljahn's groan seems to rise to the top as he's a drifting international bed hopper who won't be there when you roll over in the morning to ask him what he wants for breakfast.

Wretch Like Me *Calling All Cars*?

If you are feeling anything from slight depression to enraged anger due to the general degradation of society and the ways of the world around you then this "punk rock" album just may be the thing to fuel that frustrated fire of yours. However if you can't deal with cheesy and cliché lyrics, or music that is the same as every other punk band in the world, then pass this one up. - Kyle Bravo

THE FAMILY JERKUS



"Let me know when you're ready to be turned on,
Daddy, and I'll flip the switch!"

Zikzak *See You There* (Bitter)

If Madison Avenue had a research team that went out to document eighties Britpop, I wouldn't be surprised to find that it was Sadtman and Rubinstein. At this point no one remembers Lloyd Cole anymore. Hell, he was one of my favorites and I barely remember him. Apparently these guys do. Some will say that



Zikzak

James Vanway's Lost Reviews 1999 (Ahh... hell, he hates everything anyway)

US Maple Talker (Drag City)

Think about the word 'new'. That's right, think about it for a second. Now, think about the last time you ripped a disc from its jewel case, slipped it on the tray, pressed play and thought, "new". Been a long time, hasn't it?

US Maple, a four-piece from somewhere on the East Coast, are destined to be the only band in the last 5-7 years to be genuinely dubbed "art rock", get away with it, and totally give not one rat's ass. Why? Just buy the record and see...

Typical three chord chiming tries to fit IT'S way into what sounds like wooden fingers lined with gold scraping against a fretboard for affection while everything tumbles down a landfill with bottles and tires and hypodermic needles and a set of drums. And then that voice: The blinding abrasion of the cold wind of Maine in February; the sound of a David Lynch movie sort of speak-singing its plot devices to you in the dark. And it's all very soothing, too. Probably something to do with all that innovation...

Octant Shock-No-Par (Up Records)

Any group that builds its own robots to fill in for the gaps that its guitars and bass can't is a group for me. Throw in the fact that ex-Satisfact guy Matt Steinke is behind it all, and I'm doubly bubbly. Bubbles aside, 'Shock-No-Par' really is much better in concept than the disc's nine songs come out in stereo, much like Satisfact's last two records. Still, to hear Steinke's creations trying to do some-

Stadtman sounds like Morrissey. Fuck them. He sounds like Lloyd Cole. Anyway, apart from the crooning style, Zikzak did even more homework to affect their songwriting style. Stadtman writes songs like some odd hybrid of Martin Gore and Elvis Costello. So, yes, the subject matter his happily depressing. Add to that the fact that Rubinstein's piano chops sound like Steve Nieve's. One of the most important things they've gleaned from yesterday, something that everyone seems to have missed: hooks in the melody, instead of a guitar riff, bass pull-off, or even worse, a three chord anthem, can be very effective in making you remember a song and still LIKE it. -DLG

thing previously reserved for animate objects, and Steinke himself trying harder than ever to become a fleshly embodiment of all those things he dreamt up in shop class is plenty enough entertaining. The short films that accompany the disc via CD Rom (or whatever they call that digital movie shit now) are plenty of fun as well, or at least they are for anyone who secretly watches Tool videos with the sound off in his/her closet while the rest of the party drinks Manhattans and listens to Stereolab...

Stereolab *Cobra and Phases Group Play Blah Blah Blah... (Elektra)*

Is there anything new that one can say about Stereolab or a new Stereolab record?

The song titles have gotten a little cooler, and there's a less obvious presence of programming than there was on 'Dots and Loops', but other than that, I can't really tell any difference. Fans that have liked the group (group?) since like, '94 ('Mars Audiac Quintet') should be able to get into it after a few spins. And you know what else? Nothing, really...

Promise Ring *Very Emergency (Jade Tree)*

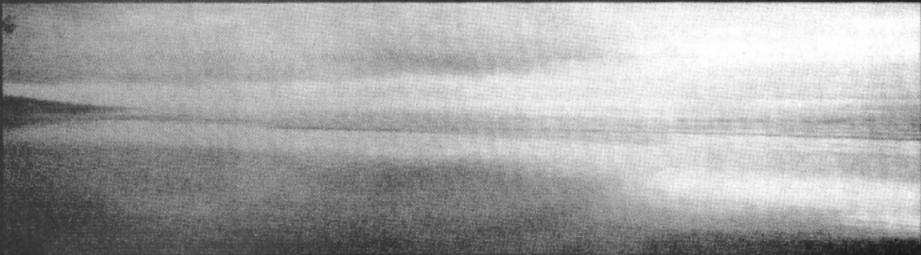
For some reason, people are still throwing the 'emo' tag at these guys. Were they ever emo? Wasn't like, Sunny Day emo? Are they still? Hyperbolic genre-fuck?

The single biggest irony of this record is, well... does anybody remember a SpinArt group from a few years back called Lotion? Of course not, they totally got slept on (even though Thomas fucking Pynchon wrote the liner

notes for their second disc) and the Promise Ring sound just like them and they get raved about. Lotion wasn't called emo. They weren't called a damn thing.

So but anyway, 'Very Emergency' has got some sweet hooks here and there and some witty college-guy lyrics. There's enough appeal here for anyone who's young enough to be ashamed of the fact that he/she totally knows why Green Day was such a hit, though I certainly think I'd rather see Promise Ring on MTV all day, now or 5 years ago... But what about Lotion??

Yeah, oh—and the biggest irony of 'Very Emergency' #2: about 3-and-a-half minutes into the record, the line, "When I come around" sneaks through like Billie Joe Armstrong's tongue lurching out of the gaps where he's got teeth missing, and all just to tell you about how he hopes you've had, you know, the time of your life. Watch out for the string section!



Fred Weaver

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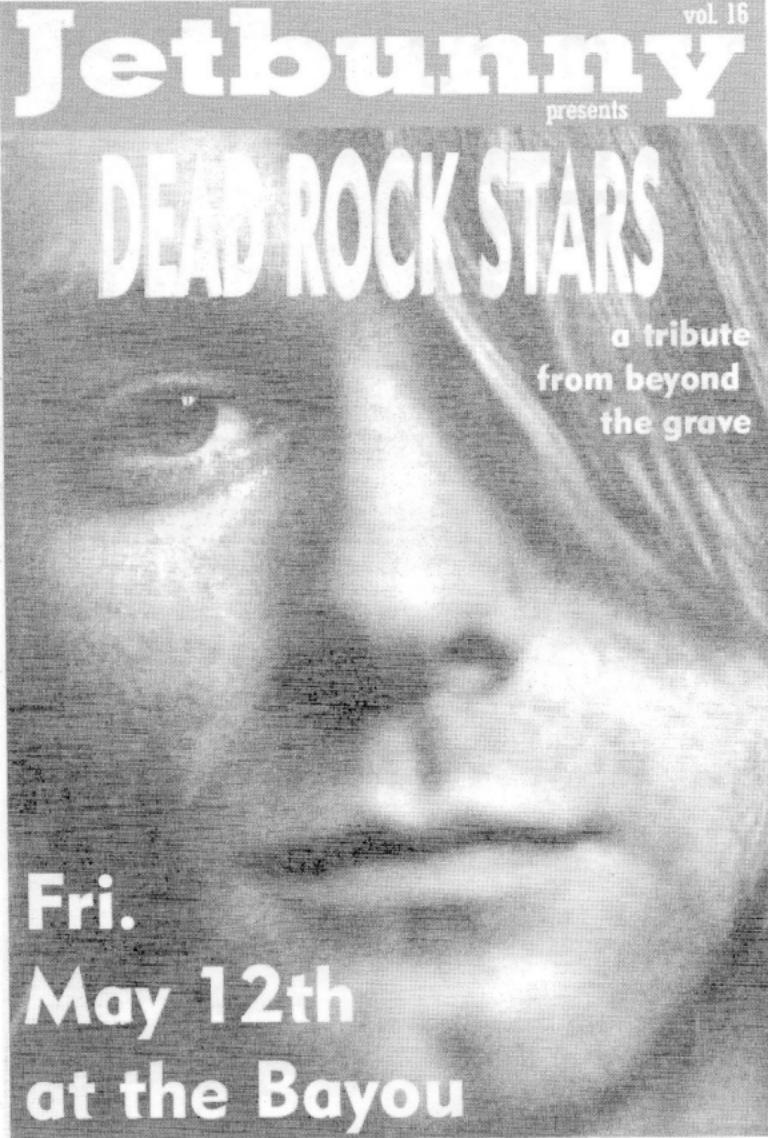
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